

VZCZCXYZ0000
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHFR #0285/01 0571528
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 261528Z FEB 09
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5628
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
INFO RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 000285

NOFORN
SIPDIS

FOR EUR/RPM, EUR/WE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/25/2019
TAGS: [NATO](#) [MARR](#) [PREL](#) [FR](#) [TU](#)
SUBJECT: FRENCH VIEWS ON NATO REINTEGRATION AND TURKEY

REF: A. ANKARA 194
[1](#)B. PARIS POINTS 7/22/08

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Kathleen Allegrone, for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C/NF) Summary. In recent meetings, senior French officials from the offices of the President and Prime Minister, the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, have uniformly agreed that France's official reintegration into the military command of NATO should be made in two steps: notification and implementation. Thus, France would first make a national announcement, perhaps conveyed by letter to NATO, that would not invoke any major procedural requirements at the NAC. They would then leave any implementing details, such as budgetary or personnel impact, to be worked out later in the regular NATO consultative process. Paris is consulting closely on this issue with NATO SYG Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, who they tell us supports their position and has promised to reinforce it with other NATO delegations. Our French contacts stress that Turkish officials have not contacted the GOF with questions about the modalities of the reintegration process, although they are aware that the Turks have raised issues with us in Ankara and Brussels (ref A). Recent visits by senior French officials to Ankara reported little progress in bilateral issues and Turkish officials have delayed a planned visit to Ankara by the French PM until late spring or early summer. No high-level Turkish officials have made recent visits to Paris. French officials remain wary of opening bilateral negotiations on reintegration with Turkey or other member state, as they don't want this issue to become a lever for individual countries to obtain French concessions on purely bilateral issues. If anything, they will seek to keep any necessary negotiations within the NATO framework. End summary.

FRENCH VIEW OF TURKISH CONCERNS

[1](#)2. (C/NF) In the past couple of weeks, Embassy officers have met with key NATO contacts in the various French government institutions including Francois Richier, President Sarkozy's Strategic Affairs advisor; Michel Miraillet, the Director of Strategic Affairs at the MOD; Emmanuel Mignot, Prime Minister Fillon's Strategic Affairs advisor; and Philippe Errera, Strategic Affairs advisor to FM Kouchner. While all of our interlocutors recognized that the Turkish reaction to French plans to fully integrate into the military command could be a concern, they noted that no Turkish official has ever raised any questions or concerns with French officials. The French desire, reflecting the wishes of President Sarkozy, is for the roll-out on reintegration to proceed smoothly, both domestically and multilaterally. Senior advisors are having

weekly interministerial meetings to discuss the broader issues related to this process. While Richier downplayed concerns about possible Turkish intervention, Mignot admitted that the issue was raising worries among French officials. Miraillet said France was aware that the Turks were exploring possible courses of action but had not yet seen or heard of specific Turkish moves to raise procedural or other questions. Errera noted that France does not view the accession modalities of Greece or Spain as precedents for the French case, since France never technically left NATO.

SEPARATION OF BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL ISSUES

13. (C/NF) Across the board, our contacts emphasized that the French strategy is to keep bilateral issues within regular bilateral channels and to avoid having a spillover into multilateral fora, including NATO. Further, GOF officials believe they have taken some positive steps in the past year to address bilateral areas of concern to the Turks. Specifically, Mignot cited French support to Ankara on the problem of the PKK, GOF steps to stall the Armenian genocide resolution in parliament and the modification last summer of a draft constitutional amendment that would have required a public referendum for the accession to the European Union of any prospective member whose population was greater than five percent of the EU's total population--a stipulation that many believed was specifically aimed at Turkey. (Embassy note: The reform that eventually passed requires the support of a three-fifths majority in parliament or, failing that, a majority "yes" vote in a national referendum for ratification to admit new EU members. See ref B.). However, Mignot acknowledged that these efforts had thus far had little effect upon the bilateral relationship. On the other hand, Miraillet observed that the Franco-Turkish bilateral military relationship has improved in the past six months.

14. (C/NF) French officials have made some efforts to consult at senior levels with Turkish officials to address any possible areas of concern. MFA Secretary General Gerard Errera and PolDir Gerard Araud (two experienced NATO hands) traveled recently to Ankara to engage with their Turkish counterparts. However, according to Miraillet they did "not get anything out of the Turks" on this question. Mignot informed us that a proposed trip to Turkey this month by PM Fillon was rejected by Turkish officials, ostensibly because of upcoming local elections. The earliest that such a visit could now take place would be later in the spring or summer. According to our interlocutors, there have been no recent visits by senior Turkish officials to Paris, and none are currently being planned.

A TWO-STEP PROCESS WITH NATO SYG SUPPORT

15. (C/NF) Errera specified that the GOF sees French reintegration as a two-step process. First, France will make the announcement of its national decision to rejoin the integrated military command. If anything, the NAC would merely welcome or take note of the decision. Secondly, any steps related to implementation of the decision, such as potential impacts on NATO budgets or staffing, would be handled in the regular NATO consultative process. French officials informed us that NATO SYG Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, who was in Paris for parliamentary briefings and meetings with French officials on February 12, shares their views on the steps towards NATO reintegration. He has reportedly promised to reinforce this message with other NATO delegations in his role as "guardian of NATO procedure." Miraillet joked that "We left with a letter (an allusion to the letter written by then French President De Gaulle to then-U.S. President Lyndon Johnson in 1966) and we could simply come back with a letter. But no one will like that kind of Gallic arrogance." He went on to observe that, in any case, the Turks (or others) really have "no instrument" to disagree with the proposed modalities, as French

reintegration will not be subject to a vote.

POSSIBILITY OF A FRENCH "GESTURE"

¶6. (C/NF) Post informally questioned whether France was considering making a gesture toward Turkey, perhaps within the context of Turkey's relations with the EU, before the question of procedure becomes a problem. Richier responded that Paris has concluded that Turkey may be raising questions about process because "Ankara wants something." However, French officials want to avoid launching any negotiations that may bring in non-NATO issues. Miraillet also indicated that the French had been thinking about this but that on issues within the EU where the Turks may desire assistance, progress also requires the support of other EU member states. For example, Miraillet emphasized that to unblock some frozen chapters of the "acquis" the "problem lies in Cyprus . . . as it does in NATO-EU cooperation generally." Moreover, Miraillet said France did not want to engage in a discussion about possible bargaining, saying that French officials did not want to give the impression that French reintegration is "something for sale" to Turkey or any other countries with a bilateral agenda. Richier agreed, stating that on NATO reintegration, Paris is not going to negotiate with Turkey or other countries bilaterally, but would keep any negotiations within NATO.

¶7. (C/NF) Comment. French officials resistance to opening discussions with Turkey or any other NATO member state on bilateral issues in exchange for support for French NATO reintegration, is based on a recognition that doing so could open a Pandora's box of demands on individual country issues (such as what NATO is experiencing with Slovenia and Croatian border disputes on Croatian accession and Greece-Macedonia). However, they are aware of the issue as a potential problem and Miraillet agreed that the issue requires continued close monitoring and additional serious thought. Further, France's imminent NATO reintegration has become a flash point in the parliament and in public debate that GOF officials are anxious to manage. Inasmuch that President Sarkozy is already facing claims that he is preparing to "sell French military independence" -- any allegations of political bargaining, particularly on Turkish accession to the EU which is very unpopular in France, could be a public relations problem for the GOF at a delicate moment. In general, French officials seem reassured by NATO SYG de Hoop Scheffer's recent visit and support and will continue to de-link NATO reintegration from other contentious issues in an effort to smoothly manage this process, which is one of President Sarkozy's highest priorities. End comment.

PEKALA